

# Union Middle School 615 East 8000 South Sandy, Utah 84070

**April 24-25, 2007** 



Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

## THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

## **Union Middle School**

615 East 8000 South Sandy, Utah 84070

April 24-25, 2007

### **UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

## DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

Brett Moulding, Director Curriculum and Instruction

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist Curriculum and Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

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#### **FOREWORD**

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 24-25, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Union Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Mary Anderson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Union Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Union Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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1833 Ridge Road Layton, UT 84040 Phone: (801) 546-4830

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### UNION MIDDLE SCHOOL

### **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

### **School Administration**

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### **Support Staff**

Instructional Support	<b>Nutrition Staff</b>
Staff	Julia Buhler
Carolyn Bosch	Donna Elder
Julie Frandsen	Marie Hansen
Andrea Landeen	Lettie Kidd
Blair Peterson	Diane Manning
Sandra Rose	Maryann Mecham
Jan Shane	Lisa Montoya
	Theresa Myles
<b>Custodial Staff</b>	Judy Opatha
Frank Bankhead	Susan Price
Larry Hayward	Karen Smith
Reina Lopez	Dorothy Stack
Richard Young	Joan Woodard
	Staff Carolyn Bosch Julie Frandsen Andrea Landeen Blair Peterson Sandra Rose Jan Shane  Custodial Staff Frank Bankhead Larry Hayward Reina Lopez

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Susan Bagley	Colleen Christensen	Jackie Dazley
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Wendy Blankenship	Ann Coulam	Wendy Fluckiger

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### UNION MIDDLE SCHOOL

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Union Middle School is to provide students with skills, attitudes, and experiences for success in achieving personal goals.

Union Middle School: *A Responsible, Respectful, and Safe Learning Community* 

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- Students learn best in a warm, friendly, and positive learning environment.
- Positive relationships facilitate student learning and achievement.
- Students benefit from a collaborative learning environment where frequent group interactions are instrumental in the learning process.
- Students have unique, varied, and differing learning needs.
- Students learn best when exposed to a variety of teaching methods and strategies.
- Students benefit from character education including concepts such as integrity, honesty, responsibility, caring, and respect.

### MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Christine M. Huley, Granite School District, Visiting Team Co-chairperson

Dr. Nancy L. Jadallah, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District, Visiting Team Co-chairperson

Mary Anne Stevens, Hunter Junior High School, Granite School District

Stella Hageman, Scott M. Matheson Junior High School, Granite School :District

#### VISITING TEAM REPORT

### UNION MIDDLE SCHOOL

**CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE** 

Union Middle School is located in Jordan School District at 615 South 8000 South in Sandy, Utah. The building was dedicated during the 1967-68 school year. Union Middle School's demographics are changing. Union Middle has seen a decline in enrollment over the past decade—from an enrollment of 1,176 students in 1998 to a current enrollment of 900 students. There has been an increase in the number of minority students and a decrease in the number of Caucasian students attending Union Middle School. However, the school remains predominantly Caucasian. Caucasian student enrollment has decreased by 17.2 percent between 2001 and 2006, while student enrollment in other ethnic groups has increased slightly. The result has been a very gradual increase in student diversity. The percentage of low socioeconomic students has increased from 23.7 percent in 2003 to 34.8 percent in 2006. The mobility rate of Union Middle School has increased to 25.9 percent in 2006. The numbers of students with disabilities and students who are English language learners at Union Middle School have both increased by approximately two percent.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

Demographics are changing, and the school is teaming up to meet these challenges. There are increased numbers of students requiring academic assistance, language assistance, and special programs. To ensure all students are meeting AYP under No Child Left Behind, the staff is using data to identify those students with special needs. Only 35 percent of the students with disabilities were proficient on the language arts CRTs, compared to 81.4 percent of the non-impacted group. Twenty-five percent of the students with disabilities were proficient in math on the CRTs, compared to 69.5 percent of the non-impacted group. Students from low socioeconomic families also scored substantially lower than the non-impacted group.

The school has made substantial gains with students who are scoring proficient on the CRTs in Geometry, Elementary Algebra, and Math 7.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The school profile provided substantial information about the students, parents, faculty and staff, programs, and student achievement focuses.

#### **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

To a great extent, Union Middle School has engaged its staff members, administration, parents, PTSA, School Community Council, and students in the collaborative self-study process on behalf of students. The collaboration among all stakeholders was obvious as the Visiting Team met with students, parents, and staff.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The self-study depicts life at Union Middle School, including the school's strengths and weaknesses. Each department listed its departmental strengths and weaknesses, as well as identifying the overall weaknesses and strengths of the school. Two areas were identified as needing greater focus: assessment and continuous improvement of instructional strategies to ensure all students are meeting the desired results for student learning.

## CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Union Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

It is the responsibility and goal of the entire Union Middle School community to prepare each student to be:

### A Collaborative Team/Group Member:

Students will demonstrate skills necessary to be active, productive, and participatory group members in community, work, and social environments.

### A Critical Thinker:

Students will assess and solve complex problems by correlating ideas, selecting appropriate problem solving strategies, use of inductive and deductive reasoning, and by applying logic and analysis to varied and challenging situations.

### An Effective Communicator:

Students will demonstrate oral, written, artistic, mathematical, and technological forms of expression to effectively gather, develop, and communicate information and ideas.

### A Lifelong Learner:

Students will set and work towards personal goals, creating plans and acquiring resources for achieving those goals. They will expand their knowledge and explore different approaches to learning, and develop personal and interpersonal skills for self improvement and personal fulfillment.

### A Responsible Citizen:

Students will understand the importance of actively participating in the political and social processes within their community. Students will become caring, contributing, and productive members of society.

### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The Visiting Team observed that Union Middle School has implemented a comprehensive consensus-building process that involves representatives from both the school and the community. The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) is very supportive of school programs, as is the School Community Council (SCC), which is comprised of both parent and teacher members. The SCC meets five times annually and posts all meeting minutes on the school website. School goals are communicated via the school website as well. An electronic marquee, the PTSA newsletter, and community participation in school activities add to effectively building ownership and support from all stakeholders for these goals.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

Union Middle School has found a variety of methods by which to communicate the school vision, beliefs, and mission. The school website includes the mission statement. The Union Middle School beliefs, desired results for student learning, motto, and expectations are all printed in the student handbook/planner, and are posted in the hallways and classrooms of the school. The Visiting Team observed that the faculty and staff are familiar with the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, but did not observe the methods by which these are shared or reinforced in individual classrooms or among individual students

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

Union Middle School's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning, as evidenced in the school's self-study as well as focus group, departmental, and individual faculty discussions with the Visiting Team.

### **Curriculum Development:**

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The Visiting Team observed that the staff at Union Middle School has made considerable efforts to align the curriculum by department with clearly defined national standards and with the Utah Core Curriculum. In collaboration with Jordan School District's curriculum department, the Math and English Departments at Union Middle School have been working with the feeder elementary schools and with the high schools, using a vertical articulation model to align curricula to provide continuous instruction across all grade levels.

Many of the departments at Union Middle School have created curriculum maps so that interdepartmental collaboration will be easily facilitated. Union Middle is on level one of the middle school reform model, and their hope is to move forward with implementation of middle school reform elements to include integrated curriculum. Other departments will continue to develop and refine their curriculum maps.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The Visiting Team observed that, to a moderate extent, the staff at Union supports the implementation of the DRSLs. The DRSLs are displayed throughout the building and in the classrooms. Students are aware of and familiar with these outcomes. While the DRSLs are informally assessed in many classes and rubrics have been created, the DRSLs are not formally assessed. The staff has indicated that, while not explicitly expressed nor assessed, the DRSLs are the foundation of their curriculum.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

A variety of learning experiences for students was observed to a large extent by the Visiting Team during classroom observations. It was noted that all faculty members had passed the standard teacher evaluation (JPAS), and that the faculty is dedicated to aligning learning strategies with the school DRSLs through recall questions during learning experiences that connect the experience with the allied DRSL. The use of the advisory class, PAWS, also serves to reinforce the intent of the DRSLs; however, it was not evident that all departments and all teachers have successfully conveyed the importance of the DRSLs to all individual students.

Other learning experiences observed included cooperative learning activities, long-term projects in progress, portfolios, book study and discussion, direct instruction and oral drill, the use of rubrics, and student performances, to name a few of many. There is also evidence of collaboration within and between departments to analyze and adjust teaching strategies on an as-needed basis.

In Principle 3 of the self-study ("Actively engages students in their learning"), the written response was limited to efforts toward school-wide discipline and behavior modification, which is commendable and appropriate. In addition to efforts to reinforce appropriate student behaviors, however, the Visiting Team encourages the staff to expand the response to include the design and implementation of actual teaching practices aimed at engaging all students in their academic learning experiences as well.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

In discussion with department chairpersons, it was noted that seventh grade students complete a Learning Style Assessment. In addition, this year Union Middle School has implemented an initial trial of teaming among Core teachers in the eighth grade, with common preparation time, common class rolls, and three consecutive class periods during which team teachers can combine classes, coteach, and implement cross-curricular planning to enhance student learning of Core Objectives. Other co-teaching situations are in place for resource students who are mainstreamed into regular education classes. Also, in discussion with department chairpersons, focus groups, and students, there is evidence of layered or "scaffolded" curricular choices students may make in some classes. The selfstudy indicates that analyses of data by departments have encouraged teachers in the various departments to engage students in activities and projects that utilize multiple intelligences and individual strengths in order to enhance learning, motivation, and confidence. The Visiting Team did not observe these analyses, but assumes that the instrument used to determine that "departments are working at an average of 83% efficiency in quality instructional design" was reliable and relevant.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

In discussion with various stakeholders, to a large extent it is evident to the Visiting Team that the staff and leadership provide numerous additional opportunities and activities to support student learning and foster lifelong learning needs. The PAWS advisory class, including their character education program, teacher and/or peer tutoring for individual students, study skills classes, tracking of academic performance for parents, and a variety of special programs, events, and facility resources (including after school computer lab use, media center access, intramural sports, and use of the weight training facility), all indicate strong efforts to engage students in order to enhance their involvement in their learning experiences at school. It is also evident to the Visiting Team that teachers at Union Middle School truly value their students and are willing to extend themselves beyond the daily classroom setting in order to support the learning of all students.

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The Visiting Team observed that Union Middle School has, to a limited extent, developed school-wide assessments on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement. It was recommended that the DRSL rubric be expanded to delineate the student expectations and the assessments to indicate mastery for each of the individual DRSLs, and to establish some formal assessment to measure student performance on these outcomes.

Individual teachers have developed several classroom assessments to monitor student progress within their individual content areas. The language arts and reading teachers indicated that the school has been consulting the district on possible reading assessments to be used school-wide and possibly district-wide.

Union Middle School does have school-wide, year-end assessments such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the CRTs, as required by the district and state.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

Placement tests are implemented to assess student readiness in the areas of ESL, special education, remedial classes, and advanced classes. Other standardized assessments include the CRT, ITBS, WRAT, and WJ III. In the individual classrooms, there was evidence of a variety of assessments, such as the use of performance-based assessments, projects/demonstrations, and presentations. At the same time, traditional forms of assessments were also observed. These included quizzes and tests. Informal assessments identified included the use of

entrance and exit cards, and thumbs up/thumbs down, as well as journal writing as a means mastery of the core standards. The staff reports that this is an area of ongoing focus, and that the goal would be for each department to align its core standards and essential concepts with assessments that measure student learning.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

In discussion with parents, students, and teachers, the climate and instructional practice is supportive and nurturing and meets the needs of the students at Union Middle School. Assessment and grading practices are equitable, and there was no evidence that sources of bias interfere with the accuracy of student results. Supports are provided for all students in the classroom to make up school work and to reflect on assignments that were given during the month. Students can double check to see whether they have submitted projects or taken quizzes and tests. It was observed that students feel comfortable checking in with teachers about the status of their work. Continuing to build upon this area school-wide is encouraged.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The Visiting Team observed that, to a large extent, there was a strong emphasis on instructional practices that focused on increased student achievement. Professional development is planned each year at both the district and the local level to support student learning and meet the school-wide goals.

A priority for the leadership is to promote a positive, safe and nurturing school environment where teachers teach and students learn. The staff is encouraged to attend professional development and implement best practices in daily instructional delivery. The leadership provides the resources so that staff can freely attend professional learning opportunities.

Teachers and students alike state that learning is important in this school. Students comment that the administration and teachers care about "us as persons as well as students."

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

To a large degree, the leadership uses a variety of student and/or school data to make decisions. It was obvious to the Visiting Team that the leadership of the school is collaborative by nature and includes all stakeholders in decisions

regarding the school and its operation. Staff members and parents applauded the leadership for its persistence in involving parents in the decision making. The parents were also very conversant in terms of the school data, which speaks to the collaborative nature of the leadership as well as the availability of data to the stakeholders.

c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?

The Visiting Team observed that, to a limited degree, the school uses a comprehensive assessment system other than the mandated CRTs and yearly Iowa Test of Basic Skills. One of the school's goals is to find a common assessment that can be used school-wide to monitor student progress in math and English. The staff and leadership demonstrated their belief in and practice of continuous reflection regarding student performance as well as the quality of their own teaching.

The English teachers indicated that they had been engaged in dialogue with the high school English Department in terms of finding a common reading assessment. Scores on the assessment would be used as placement criteria for high school classes.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The Visiting Team observed an efficient, tightly managed, and safe learning environment and school campus provided by the skillful leadership at Union Middle. As witnessed by many conversations with teachers and parents, the leadership finds the resources necessary to run a tight ship, as well as offer many programs during school hours and before and after school.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The Visiting Team observed that decisions related to the allocation and use of resources do not necessarily align to the achievement of the DRSLs per se, but are made based on collaborative meetings with the school leadership team, the staff, and the School Community Council. The allocation and use of resources does align to the school goals that are stated in the Action Plan.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The Visiting Team observed that the staff at Union Middle is, to a great extent, empowered by the school leadership to participate in, collaborate on, and share the responsibility for student learning. Ownership for student learning and participation at the school is noticeable on all levels. Parents and School Community Council members, as well as staff and students feel a real sense of community at school and express ownership in their school. Students as well as staff members were very conversant on the topic of student recognition and positive behavioral supports, as well as the curricular program offered at the school to promote student learning.

### **Community Building:**

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team observed, to a large extent, evidence of community building and positive working relationships. There is a strong climate of support and involvement by the Community Council and PTSA, as evidenced by conversation with the leaders and several members of both groups. It is evident that the administration is highly valued by the Community Council, and therefore there appears to be a strong level of trust among all these stakeholders. There is a healthy sense of safety and support among the students who were interviewed as representative of the student body. The administration and staff are aware of the necessity for strong, positive community relationships, and they have built a climate of parent involvement, student connection to the school, and dedication on the part of the faculty and staff through many and varied activities and programs.

In particular, the Visiting Team was impressed by the implementation of student-led parent-teacher conferences this year. As it was described to the team, this innovative approach to connecting parent, student, and teacher for the purpose of student improvement has great potential for strengthening student ownership of the educational process, including formal self-assessment through the use of student portfolios and face-to-face, student-led conversation with the parent, while the teacher is available for support and further documentation of student progress. Use of this type of parent-teacher conference in the spring was reported to boost the number of conferences conducted, and follow-up was conducted through the PAWS advisory classes for families who did not attend initially. Dedication to this important connection with parents is evidence that contributions by all stakeholders have been implemented toward community building. The self-study indicates the intention to improve these student-led conferences as well, and Union Middle School is to be commended for this approach.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

Collaborative networks into the community were observed by the Visiting Team to a large extent, through conversations with student representatives and focus groups as well as parents, Community Council members, and PTSA members. The orientation of incoming seventh grade students begins in the sixth grade in the spring, and is followed up with the Jump Start program to familiarize the new seventh graders with their teachers, class locations, lockers, and school procedures one day before the start of the regular school year. Again, at the ninth grade level, Reality Town provides opportunities for students to become informed about career possibilities and adult responsibilities as they prepare to move on to the high school setting. Community members and organizations are included in this event to further promote community building and collaboration. Other efforts to network with the community were cited in the self-study, such as Home and Hospital Services, a variety of school-wide and community service projects, and student performances for community members, primarily in fine and performing arts.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The faculty of Union Middle School states a clear commitment to continuous professional development. Opportunities for professional development have focused on literacy, the school improvement plan, the desired results for student learning, and specific department goals. Specific days before and during the school year have been designated for whole faculty professional learning, and the school has supported individual teacher opportunities throughout the school year through attendance at professional conferences. Many teachers take advantage of district-wide professional learning offerings as well. The administration is supportive of teacher opportunities for professional learning through the allocation of resources and time to take advantage of these opportunities. Faculty meetings have highlighted reading and writing techniques that can be applied to all content areas. In-service has been held that addresses strategies and accommodations for EL students. Many Union Middle School teachers have attended district training sessions on the Six Traits of Writing and "Reading in the Content Areas." Participation in the Utah Behavior Initiative (UBI) provides training in strategies and procedures to maintaining a climate conducive to learning.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The faculty of Union Middle School is committed to a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. Participation in UBI committees and teacher participation and support of PAWS advisory classes indicate a culture where change and continuous learning are valued. Regular faculty meetings are held which address teaching and instructional strategies and reinforce professional learning. Teachers express a need for designated opportunities where collaboration and professional learning could take place outside of the school day and contract time, but also expressed the desire for monetary compensation in order to ensure teacher participation over a period of time.

## CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE – it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

### CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

To a lesser extent, the Visiting Team felt that the school-wide action plan was adequate. The action plan needs to be expanded to include the following: Goal 1—Additional school-wide effort to implement developmentally appropriate, engaging instructional strategies in all classes and to use effective instructional strategies such as use of objectives to drive the instruction. Objectives should be clearly visible in the classroom prior to the lesson being taught, and teachers should address with students the objectives for the lesson being taught. Including these suggestions in the action plan would hopefully expand Goal 1 so that improving classroom instruction not only focuses on the assessment, but also on the delivery of the instruction.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The Visiting Team observed, to a great extent, the commitment of the staff to the goals included in the action plan. The school has created elaborate programs to address the behavioral component at Union Middle using the UBI model of positive behavior supports and school-wide behavioral expectations. Teachers in the Math and English Departments also collaborate with the district curriculum

specialists to find common assessments for student achievement and performance. Teachers continue to collaborate on common school-wide policies and procedures to standardize the school's practices for students.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

The Visiting Team observed the commitment of the staff members at Union Middle School to monitoring their progress toward their school-wide goals. The administration is very supportive and thorough, and displays attitudes indicative of follow-through. The data would indicate that there are established procedures already in place to gather the appropriate data to assess progress toward the specified goals.

The administration is very techno-savvy and posts the school data on Power School so that all staff members, district personnel, parents, and students have access to it. The administration has indicated that progress toward goals will be monitored and posted.

## CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

### **Commendations:**

- The Visiting Team commends the school community on its solidarity for building a positive school climate by implementing the UBI program for positive behavioral supports.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff on implementing student-led conferences and subsequently increasing parental attendance at these conferences.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for its dedication to building positive and committed community relationships with all stakeholders.
- The Visiting Team commends the administrative team for positively changing the culture of the school to a safe, collaborative, reflective, supportive, and caring community.
- The Visiting Team commends the school on its efforts to increase communication among the school, parents, and community.
- The Visiting Team commends the school staff and leadership for their dedication to providing a bright, clean, well-kept physical facility.

• The Visiting Team commends the staff for being proactive in regard to the change in demographics and making the necessary adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the DRSL rubrics and develop an assessment system for the DRSLs.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the action plan and include all school improvement goals. For example, literacy has been a major focus this year, but is not mentioned in the action plan.
- The Visiting Team recommends that there be an additional school-wide effort to implement developmentally appropriate, engaging instructional strategies in all classes and to use effective instructional strategies such as objectives to drive the instruction. Objectives should be clearly visible in the classroom prior to the lesson being taught, and teachers should address with students the objectives for the lesson being taught. Including these suggestions into the action plan would hopefully expand Goal 1 so that improving classroom instruction focuses not only on the assessment, but also on the delivery of the instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that school-wide teachers address the DRSLs with the students, convey the importance of the DRSLs, incorporate them into their curricula, and relate them to all activities within the school-wide curriculum.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to implement middlelevel reform elements.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to provide continuous, meaningful professional learning that ensures transfer into the classroom.
- The Visiting Team recommends that, in the future, students be included in the focus groups.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school adopt or develop appropriate assessments to monitor the progress of the students in their individual content areas.